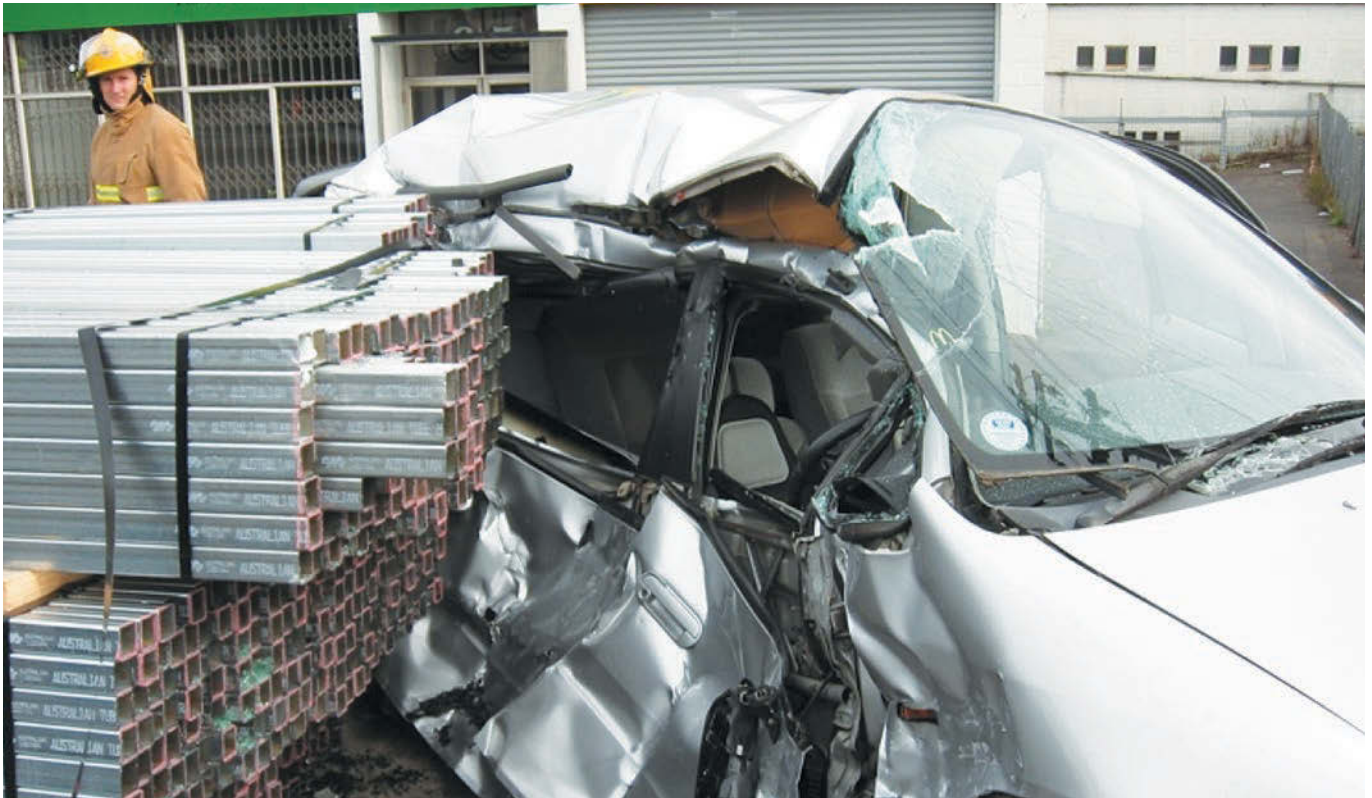


Managing load restraints to move steel safely

By **TREVOR WILKINSON**

Director and Principal Engineer, Engistics



This parked car was pushed 11 metres up the street by the impact as the load of pipe and tube came off the truck, but luckily there was no one in the car at the time.

Imagine you have just received a call from your transport provider, informing you that some of your steel load has slid from the truck and impacted another vehicle.

You first worry about the injured and the truck driver. But now your mind wanders onto what this means for your organisation and how much you are responsible.

Many members of the ASI are involved with steel loads being transported. You need to understand your responsibilities and what you can do to reduce the risk of a load restraint failure with your loads.

Chain of Responsibility

Chain of Responsibility (CoR) legislation has been in place for several years and you should know how to best comply with your responsibilities under these laws.

Most ASI members will be packers, loaders and consignors of their goods.

1. **Packer** – You need to know that for some products, poor packaging will make the load very difficult or even impossible to restrain compliantly.
2. **Loader** – If not correctly loaded onto the vehicle, it can make it difficult to comply with load restraint law.
3. **Consignor** – Choosing the transport company places some responsibilities on you for load restraint compliance.

The enforcement agencies have proven their willingness to move against any or all links in the chain of responsibility.

Load Restraint Basics

Most steel product is transported using tie-downs that rely on friction to restrain the load.

Friction is generated by a combination of:

- Friction coefficient (grip/slipperiness) between layers.

- Down-force – the load's weight combined with the force from the tie-down lashings.

So when you look at your own systems or those of your transport provider, you should look at both systems and practical elements to manage friction.

Packer

Packaging is often the direct responsibility of the ASI member. For steel, it is often a vital part of load restraint.

Steel, especially smooth steel, has a low friction coefficient so the packaging must hold the steel products tightly within their package. Products with extremely low friction coefficients such as bright (oiled) steel require careful attention to their packaging.

Your systems should include:

- Compliant packaging designs/methods.
- Ways to ensure your people apply and check packaging properly.

- Training to ensure your people know and can apply the systems.

Loader

Your loaders need to understand restraint fundamentals and structure each load properly. This is especially relevant without the driver's direct supervision.

Your systems should include:

- Training in load restraint fundamentals.
- Loading procedures, preferably pictorial and simple to follow.
- Heavy emphasis on friction in training and procedures.
- Loader qualifications and load sign-offs.
- Load restraint audit systems by second party (same organisation, different person).

Consignor

The consignor at a minimum should build in load restraint requirements during the contractual process:

- Ensure you have a working knowledge of your load restraint requirements and confirm the transport provider can satisfy them.
- Contractually require your transport provider to use load restraint systems and procedures to suit your product.
- Ensure they provide copies of the NTC Load Restraint Guide to all drivers.
- Contractually require training in load restraint for the transport company's drivers, including sub-contractors.
- Require transport providers to prove how they are complying with load restraint law.
- Check that friction is at least covered by their systems and preferably emphasised.

Consignors who provide large volumes of work to one or more transport providers have increased responsibility.

They should work with their transport providers to:

- Provide load restraint procedures for their products.

- Agree on specialised load restraint equipment for the contract that could include specialised trucks or on-deck safety gear and welded headboards.
- Develop and roll out audit systems that feed back to both the consignor and transport provider.
- Most effort on all the above for your lowest friction products.

If you employ owner drivers or your loaders also lash down loads, then you have direct responsibility for load restraint. In this case, some of the above recommendations become musts.

If it all seems like a lot of unnecessary work, ask yourself what you would tell the judge if your products came off a truck and speared someone today.

The ASI will be running a dedicated course on Chain of Responsibility and Load Restraint in the near future.

Four ways you can be a safety first

Entries are now open to ASI member businesses of any size to vie for top honours in the 2014 HEALTH AND SAFETY EXCELLENCE AWARDS by Friday 25 July in FOUR CATEGORIES:

- Individual
- Individual Practitioner
- Improvement Initiative
- Site

The Awards recognise steel industry companies and individuals for high achievements in health and safety, innovation in equipment and process improvements and are presented annually at the Australian Steel Convention.



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Entries are submitted online via the ASI website at www.steel.org.au/events/awards/

For more information, contact: **Phil Casey**
Australian Steel Institute

T: 02 9931 6605 **E:** philc@steel.org.au

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